



THE ISLAND OF THE STAIRS



Being a True Account of Certain Strange and Wonderful Adventures of Master John Hampton, Seaman, and Mistress Lucy Wilberforce, Gentlewoman, in the Great South Seas.

By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

Copyright, 1912, by Cyrus Townsend Brady

"Madam," I whispered softly, and then more loudly, "Madam!" I did not venture to say any other



I called again, and yet a third time. I called again, and yet a third time, and then for the last time with the full power of my voice, I heard a movement outside and then a voice—beloved, blessed voice, even when it rated me.

"Well, sir?" The words came to me through the partition. She was there, then, as I had divined. She had been there all the time, trying me.

"I would fain have a word with you," I answered, putting everything else by and speaking most entreatingly and with a humility I did not altogether feel.

"I desire no speech with you," was her cold and measured answer. I could hear her turn as if to move away.

"Think of my long and faithful service," I urged, "and of your gracious friendship for me, often expressed." "You yourself forgot it tonight."

"For God's sake," I cried desperately as I heard her go. "Just one word." "An apology? Do you beg forgiveness?"

"No—yes—anything!" I finished in confusion. "I will not listen. I wish to convince you of the enormity of what you have done, the grossness of your presumption. I will give you time for quiet reflection, sir."

"I am convinced already," I urged hurriedly. "So easily?" she mocked. "Madam, if you love life and honor I pray you hear me. It is not of myself I think, but of you. You are in grave peril," returned I with the utmost seriousness.

"What peril?" "There was a note of alarm in her voice in spite of her effort to be indiffer-

ent. I seized upon its promise eagerly. "The men of the ship—they are not what they should be. Captain Matthews is alone. Pinball is a villain. I trust no one but—"

"And is this the plea on which you seek enlargement?"

"That is the only plea."

"You did not discover this danger until I looked you up, did you?"

"I tell you that it is not for myself I fear, but for you," I persisted.

"And was it for that you insulted me on the quarterdeck before the men? I will hear no more. It is a foolish plea. The men are devoted to me and—"

"For God's sake, Mistress Lucy," I cried, but this time she was gone.

I heard the door of her cabin shut violently. There was no help for it. Well, I must devise some way unaided, for I must get out for her sake. The cabin was lighted by an air port closed by a deadeye. I measured it, drew back the thick glass and examined the opening, although I knew it was a futile proposition. A slender boy might have slipped through, but not a man such as I. My mighty thighs and sinews and great bulk required a door, and no small one either.

The wind had ceased blowing hard outside, and some spray came in through the port as the waves slapped the side of the ship. I closed and secured it. There was nothing to be gained there. I must seek some other way.

I was not weaponless. Nobody had thought to search the cabin, and a brace of pistols which I always kept loaded and ready for an emergency were locked securely in my chest. My hanger hung at the side of my berth. The door was a strong one. It was locked and barred without. I might have broken it down; I could have done so if I had had space enough in which to run and hurl myself against it. I might even have kicked it to pieces with my heavy seaman's boot. Certainly I could easily have blown the lock off with my pistol, but any of these endeavors would have roused the ship.

I had one other hope. If Captain Matthews should come to the cabin I would appeal to him. For the rest I determined not to sleep that night. Some strange foreboding possessed me.

We were near the latitude and longitude of the island we were seeking, if indeed there were such an island as was thought to be, and I reasoned that the men would argue now and it would be a good time for an outbreak, especially since I was removed. Would it come that night? Would it come at all? Was I mistaken in the men?

I have often wondered why women were made, and since they were made, why men should be such fools about them. Here I was helpless just because I had snatched a kiss from one. And now that I am in the mood for confession, I might as well say that I fully rejoiced in that kiss.

Well, whatever happened, I had the memory of that kiss. She would never forgive me. Of course there was absolutely no hope that she would return my suit, even in her poverty. She was not for such as I, and if there was anything in this old buccaneer's parchment, if there was an island and if she did get the treasure, why, the world would be at her feet again. And I,

like the fool I was, was helping her to get it to bring it about. I was mad, aye, mad, with impotent helplessness that night.

I sat there in the dark, no light being vouchsafed to me, and the lights in the outer cabin not having been lighted for a long time. The wind rose and rose. The ship was pitching madly. My room was on the starboard side of the cabin, and presently I heard all hands called to reef the topsails. Captain Matthews was alert and ready, of course. Presently he put the ship about, and with the canvas off of her she was steadier. There did not seem to be any especial danger in the weather, and for that I was thankful.

I must have dozed. I was awakened by the last echoing of the bell forward. I didn't know what time it was, because I didn't know whether I had heard it begin to strike, but I could count three couples, which meant that it was 11 o'clock at least. I didn't know, of course, that it was eight bells, midnight, until the voice of the boat swain came to me through the bulkhead that separated the cabin from the quarterdeck.

"A—all the port watch!"

I could hear the men below grumbling and cursing as they turned out. They had evidently been sent below to the hammocks after the topsails had been reefed for a couple of hours in. I could hear scraps of conversation.

"Now!"

"Kill him!"

"This is the best time!"

"The old man's alone!"

What I heard filled me with dismay. I picked up the pistol and pointed it at the lock in the door. I had made up my mind, come what might, to blow off the lock and get free. Before I could press the trigger I heard a call on the deck above me, a shot, a rush of feet, a scuffle, a groan, a fall!

CHAPTER VII.

Wherein I Bargain For a Woman.

WHAT had happened I could well guess. Captain Matthews had been attacked.

He had promptly shot one of the mutineers, and thereafter the rest had got him. My first impulse was to blow open the lock of the door and rush to his rescue, but wiser counsel prevailed, and I did nothing. I am, I think, somewhat cool headed in a crisis, and surely this was one. I could wait. A loaded pistol was better than an empty one, and to deal with me they would have to come to me for whatever purpose they might entertain, either to murder me or to release me. In either event I could do more than if I rushed into the fray now. I could not help Captain Matthews. I was sure that whatever fell purpose they might entertain for my little mistress would be in abeyance until they had settled with me.

I listened with every nerve strained to the utmost. I also waited most anxiously for the opening of the after cabin door, which was her own, but

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

Fortunately I had not long to wait, for in less time by far than I have taken to tell it the hatch was opened and the heavy booted men clattered down the companionway. The key was in the lock outside, and I could hear them turn it. I loosened my sword, which I had slung by its belt around my waist, picked up the two pistols, sent my back up against the side of the ship and made ready for whatever came.

"The first man," I hissed out, "gets a bullet."

she must have been in a sound sleep, indeed, for the door did not open. Evidently she had heard nothing. I waited. It was not an easy task, but I judged it best.

AMERICA'S SWITZERLAND, WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The author of the following beautiful poem—the first written in description of our mountains—gave a reading of the same at the home of Mr. James H. Cathey, and at the urgent request of friends there present consented to its publication in the Journal. Coming from our distinguished and beloved son of Jackson, Dr. Ridley, we deem it a distinct honor to our home-land, and we hasten to publish it as rapidly as space will permit.

C. A. RIDLEY.

For years I've lived in a tropic clime

Where Winter's tent is seldom pitched

And where the flaming torch of flowers

Flashes its glory the whole year round.

Where, like sentinel soldiers, stand the trees

Bearded with moss of Confederate gray

That like Patriarchial beards of old

Swings and sways in the gentle breeze.

The streams are lazy, and the waters dark

And the sky mist-washed and low,

The atmosphere kind o' dreamy like

With eternal sameness everywhere.

The seasons come, abide and go

With almost imperceptible tread

With the same greensward pressing

your feet

And heaven's arch concaved o'er

The same tropical lazy world

From Spring to Winter's last farewell.

The same birds sing when the year is old

That sang its birth-hymn months before.

And each day new in that alone

It brings the sun from night's embrace

And scatters the laughing stars.

But in my mountains 'tis not so.

SPRING TIME.

Spring goes forth neath beryl skies

And the pulsing earth-heart shouts for joy.

Jonquils open their laughing eyes—

Fair Arbutus scents the air

With aromatics, nectar sweet,

Where the wild honey-suckle unfolds its flag

Like golden shimmer on a bridal veil.

From the waving palms of the apple tree

Wee wizard shells of blossom fall

And willow tresses of emerald green

Sway gently o'er the streamlet's edge

That quietly flows through the orchard grass.

Violets open their purple lips

And hawthorn blossoms cover the hill.

Back of the garden and below the spring

The whippoorwill moans till roving stars

Blaze their way on the brow of night

And fair Selene her silver drops

In shimmering lances through the trees.

Spring in my mountains is Paradise.

I often long, like a little child

For an hour to lean 'gainst the mountain's breast

And dream the dreams that years ago

Spurred and lashed me night and day

As on her mossy lap I sat

Watching the witchery of a summer night.

I see them yet—those "shooting stars—

That played hide-and-seek above the West

Roving down the amber slants

Which meet and kiss the trees.

The burnished meadows, of the sky poetic are, tho seen from every-

where, But would you be enchanted,—thrilled, Go with me to my Switzerland And glimpse the red west's parting blush, As the infinite fields that bend above Light their winking shining lamps To aid the night, our gentle nurse, Who stoops to touch our eyelids down. No fairer vision was ere unfurled Nor has Nature's lavish hand Hung such paintings anywhere As in America's Switzerland— My own, my native clime. (To be continued)

Are You a Woman?

Take Cardui

The Woman's Tonic

FOR SALE AT ALL DRUGGISTS

For Fewest Changes of Cars, Best Schedules and the Very Lowest Rates to All Points in the North, South, East and West, Travel via

SOUTHERN RAILWAY.

Premier Carrier of the South.

For Further Information And Particulars Call On or Write J. H. WOOD, D. P. A., Asheville, N. C.

Notice.

Owing to death of the manager of this firm it is necessary that all business handled by him be closed up immediately and we will ask parties indebted to this company to arrange their accounts at once. We will greatly appreciate the prompt attention our customers will give this request.

SYLVA SUPPLY CO.

SOU. RY. SCHEDULE

East Bound Train. No. 20 Lv. Murphy 6:30 a. m. Ar. Sylva 10:43 a. m. Ar. Asheville 1:55 p. m. No. 18 Lv. Murphy 11:30 a. m. Ar. Sylva 3:47 p. m. Ar. Asheville 6:55 p. m.

West Bound Train. No. 17 Lv. Asheville 8:30 a. m. Ar. Sylva 11:13 a. m. Ar. Murphy 10:55 p. m. No. 19 Lv. Asheville 3:20 p. m. Ar. Sylva 6:11 p. m. Ar. Murphy 10:55 p. m.

W. V. DORSEY, Local Passenger Agent.

\$100 Reward, \$100

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Cat